



## Food Manager Memo # 1

### Revised - September 19, 2003

#### Frequent Food Temperature Violations

The food code requires that all potentially hazardous food meet temperature requirements during storage, preparation, display, service and transportation. Potentially hazardous foods are any foods that will support rapid bacterial growth that may lead to a food borne illness. Examples are beef, pork, poultry, eggs, dairy products, tofu, soy products, cooked rice, cooked vegetables and cut melons. If these foods are left or held at temperatures between 41° F to 135° F, the bacteria that may be present on these products will grow rapidly. For this reason the temperature range of 41° F to 135° F is called the food temperature danger zone. If your cooling equipment cannot consistently hold 41° F or below, potentially hazardous food may be held at 41° F to 135° F, but only for 4 days.

Once food is properly cooked, it may be held hot at 135° F or above or it may be cooled as rapidly as possible and held at 41° F or less. Frequent violations include incorrect hot or cold holding temperatures caused by a failure to properly reheat or cool foods before they are placed on steam tables or cold tables. An example of this is the use of a steam table to reheat foods. Steam tables should not be used for reheating foods since they are rarely capable of reheating to 165° F rapidly prior to holding them at 135° F. **FOODS SHOULD BE REHEATED TO 165° F IN TWO HOURS OR LESS.** It may even be necessary to reheat foods in small containers to accomplish this. Food reheated in a microwave oven must be heated to a temperature of 165° F and allowed to stand covered two minutes after reheating.

Failure to rapidly cool cooked food products is a frequent source of trouble. Rapid cooling is best accomplished by placing foods in shallow containers in a cooling unit or by using an ice water bath. Stirring foods also helps to reduce the temperature. Use your food product thermometer and a watch to **INSURE FOODS ARE COOLED TO 70° F WITHIN TWO HOURS OR LESS AND THEN TO 41° F, OR BELOW, WITHIN AN ADDITIONAL 4 HOURS.**

The thawing of foods is also a frequent problem. Thawing of foods should be done in a refrigerator, under cold running water, in a microwave oven if the food is to be cooked immediately, or as part of the cooking process. **FOOD SHOULD NEVER BE THAWED AT ROOM TEMPERATURE.**

Don't guess. **USE A PROBE TYPE METAL STEM THERMOMETER** to verify temperatures. The LLCHD considers temperature violations to be very serious. Any temperature violation that may lead to a food borne illness found on inspection results in the issuance of a Food Enforcement Notice.